



1-1-1935

# Causes of Irregular Attendance and Truancy in the Indianapolis Public Schools

Carrie B. Martin

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/grtheses>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Martin, Carrie B., "Causes of Irregular Attendance and Truancy in the Indianapolis Public Schools" (1935). *Graduate Thesis Collection*. Paper 217.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Scholarship at Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Thesis Collection by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact [fgaede@butler.edu](mailto:fgaede@butler.edu).

CAUSES OF IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE  
AND TRUANCY IN THE  
INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BY  
CARRIE B. MARTIN

A Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirement for the Degree  
Master of Science

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
BUTLER UNIVERSITY

1935

298.35

LD  
701  
.B82  
M3742

## PREFACE

The schools realize that they have scarcely touched the problem of attendance due to the fact that the public is not willing to pay for more trained workers. However it is a serious problem and there are many causes underlying the difficulty. Since truancy is the first overt act in violation of the law and irregular attendance is expensive to the system as well as to the children, conditions should be improved as soon as possible and the causes eliminated in so far as it is feasible. A study of conditions is important and urgent.

The writer is deeply grateful to Dr. W. L. Richardson, Dr. I. T. Shultz for their advice and counsel, to Miss Bertha Leming, Supervisor of Case work of the Social Service Department of the Indianapolis Public Schools, and to the teachers of School Twenty-Six for their cooperation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . .	Page ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS . . . . .	iii
 Chapter	
I.-- THE PROBLEM OF IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY . . . . .	1
The definition of terms . . . . .	2
Purpose of the study . . . . .	3
Method of attack . . . . .	3
Source of data . . . . .	4
Reviews of previous studies . . . . .	6
Need for study of problem . . . . .	8
Truancy a symptom of maladjustment . . . . .	8
Problem restated . . . . .	9
Summary . . . . .	10
 II.-- THE EFFECT OF PARENTAL INDIFFERENCE AND IGNORANCE . . . . .	 11
Problem of attendance a social problem . . . . .	11
Trivial excuses. . . . .	12
Classification of excuses . . . . .	13
Factors influencing irregular attendance . . . . .	14
Attitude of parents. . . . .	15
Case 1 . . . . .	15
Case 2 . . . . .	16
Effect of ignorance on attendance . . . . .	19
Leniency in homes. . . . .	20
Problem of children of immigrant and illiterate parents . . . . .	21
Case 3 . . . . .	22
Case 4. . . . .	24
Case 5 . . . . .	25
Conclusion and summary . . . . .	27
 III.-- ILLNESS AS A CAUSE. . . . .	 30
Investigation of United States Health Service Department . . . . .	30
Table of Chief Causes of Illness. . . . .	31



## TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

Explanation of table . . . . .	32
Epidemic-means of preventing. . . . .	33
Indulgent parents . . . . .	34
Skin diseases . . . . .	35
Colds . . . . .	36
Trivial nature of illnesses . . . . .	37
Case 1 . . . . .	38
Case 2 . . . . .	39
Case 3 . . . . .	39
Case 4 . . . . .	40
Case 5 . . . . .	41
Summary and conclusion . . . . .	43
 IV.-- POVERTY AS A CAUSE . . . . .	45
Definition of poverty . . . . .	45
Scarcity of data . . . . .	46
Table II-Economic status of family . . . . .	47
Causative factors of poverty . . . . .	48
Table III . . . . .	49
Conditions of poverty stricken home . . . . .	49
Results of poverty . . . . .	50
Mothers working away from home . . . . .	50
Work of social service department . . . . .	52
Case 1 . . . . .	53
Case 2 . . . . .	55
Case 3 . . . . .	58
Conclusion and summary . . . . .	59
 V.-- THE EFFECT OF THE BROKEN HOME . . . . .	61
Definition of broken home . . . . .	61
Findings of Hiatt and Breckenridge . . . . .	62
Results of broken home . . . . .	62
Results of dissensions . . . . .	65
Table IV- Type of homes . . . . .	66
Children of deserted mothers . . . . .	67
Immoral homes . . . . .	68
Case 1 . . . . .	69
Case 2 . . . . .	71
Case 3 . . . . .	72
Case 4 . . . . .	74
Case 5 . . . . .	75
Summary and conclusion . . . . .	78
 VI.-- CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	79
Recommendations . . . . .	82
Bibliography . . . . .	84
Appendices-Additional cases . . . . .	v

A STUDY OF THE CAUSES OF  
IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY  
IN THE INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CHAPTER I.

THE PROBLEM OF IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

A constant and unsolved problem in school administration is poor attendance. Repeated and prolonged absences from school may represent the first overt symptoms of deeper-lying maladjustments in the physical health, school placement, home conditions or personality make-up of the child. In fact all authorities and social workers consider that irregular attendance and truancy are symptoms of maladjustment in social conditions and strive to ascertain the causes.

The causes of truancy are little known. Many reasons have been hazarded but a study of the literature and research shows that a great deal of sentimentalizing has been indulged in and only recently much scientific work has been done. (1)

---

<sup>1</sup>Paul Fleming, Truancy - When and Why it Occurs",  
Nation's Schools, Vol. VI, No. 5 (November 1930) p. 31.

The following statements define the situations to which the writer refers when speaking of irregular attendance and truancy:

Long absences of several consecutive half days are usually due to illness, whereas irregular absences and the occasional half day or days of non-attendance are much more likely to be unnecessary-founded on some trivial excuse. In general irregular attendance is determined by the number of different periods the child is absent. Much of the attendance is irregular. (2)

Truancy is a pupil absence occurring without the consent of the parent or school authorities.<sup>3</sup>

Truancy and irregular attendance present a persistent and serious problem. Intensive investigation of child life and behavior have taught us that the child is frequently unable to supply a satisfactory reason for his absence. It is the opinion of one writer that in the case of a great many truants or chronic absentees, excessive absence from the classroom may have its roots in an intra-psychic conflict traceable to the home situation.<sup>4</sup> It will be the pur-

---

<sup>2</sup>Edith and Sophonisba P. Breckenridge, Truancy and Non-Attendance in the Chicago Schools, Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1917, p. 119.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Fleming, Op.cit. p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>Fred Brown- "The Truant Child School and Society," Vol 40, No. 1041, Dec. 8, 1934, p. 773.

pose of this study to show from fifty typical cases described in the following chapters and appendix, how irregular attendance and truancy are affected by factors in home conditions, namely, indifference and ignorance, illness, poverty and the broken home. As a means of investigation the records of fifty pupils living in various parts of the city and attending the elementary, high and parochial schools were examined. These pupils had been persistent offenders and were problem cases because of poor attendance.

The case study method has been used in order to discover some of the underlying causes in the hope to procure permanent improvement. The investigation proceeds to the home to discover the conditions which help to explain the case under observation. In studying all the conditions which bear upon the individual it is hoped that the fundamental difficulties which will be discovered which on being removed will return the individual to a normal life. This is not always achieved but not infrequently the conditions are ameliorated and the method is used for the most part in studying children who are seriously maladjusted in the school or community. (5)

In using this method an array of data must be available before decisions can be reached and even then decisions must be made tentatively. Every factor which may have some bearing upon the problem under consideration must be taken into account.

---

<sup>5</sup>  
A. M. Jordan- Educational Psychology, New York, Henry Holt, 1928, p. 14.

The study of the cases used in this dissertation was made from the records of the public school social service department. This was done because the records were far more complete than any the writer could have compiled in a reasonable period of time and over so wide an area. Thousands of contacts are annually made through the medium of the school visitors and since the cases are taken from various parts of the city a cross section of the school population is obtained.

Social investigations when made by trained workers and school visitors present such a detailed and complicated picture of interrelated psychological and environmental forces playing a causal part in the individual delinquent behavior that it has been almost impossible to reduce such data to diagnostic or statistical tables. These findings can be readily expressed in individual case summary forms, but when depersonalized and arranged in tabular form for statistical purposes the results are not enlightening. (6)

Additional cases and examples of record forms are found in the appendix.

It is difficult to learn definitely what are the causes of irregularity and truancy as the sources of information are partially subjective and the reasons for absences from school are often complex.

There is a growing realization that truancy and other infractions of rules are the natural indicators that the child in his environment is not having his fundamental needs met. The whole emphasis at this time is toward some type of

---

<sup>6</sup> Clara Bassett- Mental Hygiene In the Community, New York, MacMillan Company, 1934, p. 112.



social diagnosis that comprehends and seeks to ameliorate those conditions that are the causes. (7)

At the White House Conference it was admitted that non-attendance at school breaks a law but it is extremely difficult to analyze the factors which are the basis of the delinquency. The following is an excerpt from the report of the committee:

Truancy is the child's first overt break with the authority of the group; irritations, maladjustments, and delinquencies arise from the myriad problems involved in school discipline. While non-attendance at school breaks a law, it is extremely difficult to analyze those factors back of the delinquencies. Parental antagonism to apparently vigorous school demands, parental indifference, the school's or teacher's seeming to discourage and block development of certain children, the inviting or imperiously demanding call to freedom by the gang or comrade - undoubtedly the whole gamut of individual and social drives and needs lies back of the problem of attendance. (8)

The problems of attendance are matters that involve only a small fraction of the school population. In many respects those with whom the school comes into conflict are those who are striving against social controls. Without doubt the children in these families need assistance and supervision.

---

<sup>7</sup>White House Conference Sec. IV The Delinquent Child  
New York The Century Company 1932 p.40.

<sup>8</sup>White House Conference Op. Cit. p. 105.

It seems reasonable that attendance should improve as we progress toward the ideal of the child centered school. School boards endeavor to assist by providing attractive sites and buildings and adequate equipment. Superintendents, supervisors, and teachers offer solutions by improving the organization, course of study and methods of presentation. (9)

One of the outstanding studies of this problem was made by James S. Hiatt who analyzed one hundred of the most flagrant and persistent offenders in the schools of Philadelphia. Co-operating in this study were the Public Education Association and the Chief of the Bureau of Education. The cases selected were from each school district and chosen at random. Hiatt found that 36% of the truants lived in poor neighborhoods, 32% in poor, squalid and neglected surroundings, 25% had no fathers in the home, 25% of the fathers had died, 50% had deserted, while 3% were in prison, 28% of the fathers were addicted to drink. Eleven of the cases studied were motherless, 40 had mothers who had regular employment and 20 of the mothers drank.

Another intensive and exhaustive study was made by Doctors E. Abbott and S.B. Breckenridge in Chicago. It is their opinion that

Statistics relating to non-attendance are of little value unless accompanied by an inquiry into

---

<sup>9</sup>Paul Fleming Op. Cit. p. 32

the cause of absence. In such an inquiry non-attendance should be investigated at the source, that is, by a careful inquiry made in the home to determine how far the causes may be removable and the absences preventable. . (10)

It was found in this detailed study that 78% of the families were poor or very poor, that 21% were in fairly comfortable circumstances, while a very few families, (10%) could be called very comfortable, 40% of the children were motherless, 60% came from fatherless families and 90% came from families in which both parents were living. The findings are summarized by the following quotation:

It may be said that there is a great deal of irregular attendance in the poor neighborhoods- - -. Wherever conditions are unfavorable to the child life the school suffers from non-attendance, truancy, and the violation of school rules which come with the presence in school of children from extremely poor undisciplined or neglected homes. Large numbers of children in the poor districts of the city are insufficiently clad, are in the need of medical attention, and are improperly fed or underfed. Many others suffer from physical discomforts and find the prospect of drifting idly and listlessly about the streets and alleys instead of being subjected to the discipline of school a temptation impossible to resist. (11)

Every possible measure is used to secure prompt and regular attendance and yet there are some cases where the utmost efforts are of no avail. In spite of the special

---

<sup>10</sup> Abbott and Breckenridge Op. Cit. p. 126

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 189



attention of school principals and teachers, the visitors of the social service department, the prosecution of parents in the Juvenile Court, nothing seems to have the desired results for irregular attendance and truancy continue.

From personal experience and observation as a teacher in the Indianapolis schools, the writer finds that irregularity of attendance is a serious waste in all grades of the school, but for obvious reasons it is most troublesome in the lower grades where the stimulus of the teacher and the class instruction are so essential to progress. Delinquent pupils not only miss the work that has been done during their absence but they necessarily retard the progress of the class when they return. In other words the irregular or truant pupil is a dead weight that the remainder of the class is forced to carry.

From the findings of the White House Conference, the Hiatt study, the Abbott and Breckenridge study, and the problem as it presents itself in the Indianapolis schools one comes to the conclusion, as already stated, that truancy is not a disease but a symptom, that may indicate a complication of diseases. It is the work of the school to measure truancy, to trace causes for it, and to change conditions that are responsible for the situation.

A study of irregular attendance and truancy, and the causes therefore, is necessary and a matter of educational social importance so that absence beyond an "irreducible minimum" might be prevented.

The family, the basic and most essential unit of social organization has been studied by many authorities, all of whom have agreed that in it lie tremendous forces which determine the behavior of the child. Divorce has rapidly increased, which is one criterion of social disorder. According to Healy and Bronner where to place a large measure of responsibility, where to direct a strong attack in treatment for prevention of delinquency stands out with striking clearness. The modern home frequently becomes the breeding place for the future criminal. Incompetent or indifferent parents can do more to start boys and girls on the wrong path than social work can do to reclaim them. (12)

PROBLEM RESTATED: From the foregoing summary of studies already made in connection with truancy and irregular attendance the problem may now be more definitely stated as follows:

Truancy and irregular attendance in the Indianapolis Public Schools is a social problem. Evidence shows that although there are various causes; parental indifference and ignorance, poverty, illness and the broken homes are contributing factors in a large number of cases. The

---

<sup>12</sup>Thomas E. Sullenger- "Juvenile Delinquency"  
Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology Vol. XXIV No. 6,  
 March-April 1934, p. 1088.

problem restated is: What are the causes in detail of irregular attendance and truancy in the Indianapolis Public Schools and what suggestions could be offered to improve these conditions?

SUMMARY: The purpose of this chapter is to present the following facts:

(a) Purpose of the study: To show how truancy and irregular attendance are encouraged by indifference and ignorance, illness, poverty and the broken home.

(b) Review of previous studies.

(c) Method to be employed will be that known as case study method.

(d) The problem restated.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE EFFECT OF PARENTAL INDIFFERENCE AND IGNORANCE

In the preceding chapter, it was stated that the problem of attendance is a social problem and that no study of truancy and the causes of absence can be of value without a clear understanding of family and home conditions. In this chapter we shall show how indifference and ignorance on the part of the parents are responsible for a large portion of irregular attendance and truancy. According to Abbott and Breckenridge.

There are always children absent without cause who are merely warned by the principals or teachers, but not referred to the school visitor; there are also those children whose absences from school have escaped the notice of the school authorities entirely; finally, there are the children supposed by the principals or teachers to be absent for sufficient cause. As a matter of fact, in a majority of cases only a very careful investigation can show whether or not a child's absence is necessary or not. (13)

In well-to-do sections of the city the question of attendance is not a social problem of importance as it is

---

<sup>13</sup> Abbott and Breckenridge. Op. cit. p. 92.

in the poor and congested neighborhoods. This evil can be cured only after it is understood and this can be done by studying the probable source, or at least, the home conditions of the offenders. Of the fifty cases studied almost all lived in poor neighborhoods, and some in extreme poverty. The social service department of the Indianapolis public schools was requested to furnish books and clothing in nearly every instance.

Data secured from records of the school visitors showed that parental indifference with respect to school is a contributing factor. The following are some of the excuses given by parents for absence:

Child had to go on an errand.

Sister was sick and child had to stay home with her.

Mother was called away and did not return in time to get child ready for school.

Child had to stay home and receive coal.

Boy had no clean shirt.

Mother was sick.

Mother had to go to clinic and pupil had to stay home with younger children.

Child needed shoes.

Weather was too cold.

Snow was too deep.

Child had to stay home with baby.

Family moved and child had to help with the packing.

Child had to go down town.

Child had no soap with which to wash face.

Pupil attended the World's Fair.

Family overslept.

Pupil was taken on a visit.

An examination of these excuses will reveal that few are valid. Indifference takes various forms- in some cases the parents find flimsy pretexts for absences; in other cases they give no excuse but merely assert their right to do as they wish. Often indifference is sheer inertia. Much of the time children are kept at home to work. This is due frequently to a whim of the parents rather than any real emergency. Parents, of course, feel that they need their children to help, but not realizing the value of education they see no reason for sending their children to school when there is work to be done.

The various excuses given could be grouped in two divisions: (1) Absences in the majority of cases caused by family emergencies; (2) Absences which could be avoided by a little more planning and trouble on the part of the mother, such as running of errands, helping with household duties, and taking care of younger children.

One can easily see that family emergencies of all



sorts fall heavily upon the children in poor homes and many pupils are absent a considerable number of days because of the illness of some member of the household. Cases of chronic illness are the most serious and the child is sometimes made to lose an entire term because there is no one else to care for a sick mother or father during a long illness. In a larger number of cases, however the children are kept at home to relieve a sudden pressure, caused by an unforeseen situation, for example, looking for coal man, waiting for a paper hanger, or for the insurance agent.

Reckless and Smith have very well described the condition of affairs as it exists.

In some cases the parents do not force the children to attend school. They may want their children to go to school but whatever the attitude they do not use any means of control. Parental attitudes that accompany truancy in the children are of several kinds: indifference, desire for attendance accompanied by the belief that they will go voluntarily, opposition to attendance requirement, or to school officials. In each of these instances the cure for truancy cannot begin with the home until the attitude of the parents is changed. The multiplicity of factors that produce these attitudes or types of behavior vary from extreme lack of interest in the child, or religious or ethical notions of permitting individualism in children to hatred of everything required. (14)

---

<sup>14</sup> Walter C. Reckless and Mapheus Smith Juvenile Delinquency. New York McGraw Hill Book Co. 1932 p. 163.

The ability of the family to provide, care for, guide or control a child may be seriously undermined by overindulgent or unintelligent parents. Ignorance, lack of time, and a score of other factors, influencing parents or children have combined to make attendance irregular. Indifference, low standards and lax discipline in the homes is responsible for much irregularity. In order that we may not be guilty of basing our conclusion on mere opinion, let us examine a few actual cases.

CASE 1. M. family lived in a congested district. The home was poorly furnished but clean. After the father's employment became irregular, his wages were insufficient to provide books and clothing for the children. The eldest boy, W., was reported repeatedly for truancy. When the school visitor called to investigate the case the boy jumped into bed. In hopes of improving his attendance and possibly to overcome his aversion for the house the family lived in, he was sent to stay in Illinois with relatives, but was returned shortly. The boy was thoroughly unreliable and tricky. He would take his mother to school and direct her to the wrong room or walk out while the parent and teacher were talking. He was absent so much that his parents were warned if he did not attend better he would be taken to Juvenile Court. The father claimed that he had done everything except filing incorrigible papers against him. The teacher felt that the boy acted as he did because the mother made all manner of excuses for him. The father brought the boy to school and arrangements were made for him to attend shop.

The mother did not cooperate with the school in notifying the authorities when he had no clothing. The younger brother, R., was following in the steps of W. and the school visitor felt that something should be done. W. was sent to the Detention Home, but was released when he promised to reform. On his return to school he did not attend any better. Both boys were taken to Juvenile Court. A lawyer was employed by the family to defend the case. When the lawyer learned from the school visitor the state of



affairs he refused to defend the case. The boy did not attend school one day during the last week of school although the judge had suspended sentence providing the boy went back to school.

COMMENT: The M. family, an actual case reported by a school visitor of the social service department of the public schools illustrates indifference on the part of the parent. W. was upheld in his poor attendance by his mother who made ineffectual excuses whenever he was absent. The father was not quite as indifferent and unconcerned as the mother, but he did not assert his authority. If they had been concerned when the boys began playing truant the case would not have ended in the Juvenile Court. Indifference on the part of the parents when the children were small developed into parental incompetence, a not uncommon source of delinquency. The home environment is the most important contributing factor in the formation of character and habit. In many homes the strict discipline and corporal punishment of old has given place to effeminate indulgence of parents of the idlest whims of their children.

CASE 2. E.W., a pupil at one of the high schools was reported for absence. She had been absent from her Geometry class almost every day, claiming that her mother was ill and that she had to wait for an older sister to come and wait on the mother. Although E. W. was taking the subject over the second time, she was doing very poor work and would not stay to conference. The family was in fair circumstances, the house plainly furnished but rather

disorderly. The mother explained that she had been sick and had sometimes kept E. W. to help her but this condition had not existed for sometime. The family arose late because the father worked at a garage at night and did not go to work early in the morning. She had had some trouble in getting the grandchildren off to school on time but she was managing to do so at the time of the trouble with E. W. She felt that the girl was old enough to watch this herself. The girl could get to school in time if she did not keep such late hours at night with a crowd of boys and girls. She promised to watch the attendance more closely.

On the next visit the mother was very indefinite about the dates of the absences. She said the girl had been absent on account of tonsillitis but should not have been absent so frequently. A few days later the mother said that she had signed an excuse for E. W. but did not notice the dates of the absences. The girl did not like to go to school and would leave home pretending to go. She married at the age of sixteen.

The younger boys were reported on account of tardiness and absence. When they were taken to task about their attendance they were quite indifferent. The oldest boy, in a few days, vanished from town and this was the cause of his absence for a while. The mother came to school in response to a request from the principal and admitted that she was unable to manage the boys and wished aid in handling them. One boy would sleep on benches at the Terminal Station and beg money from persons on the street to attend shows. The school visitor suggested that the cases be referred to the Juvenile Court. The mother was reminded that she had been too indifferent and unconcerned when the boy was younger. She had made numerous excuses about his tardiness and absences, and was reluctant to have him taken to Juvenile Court. A month or so later he was held at the Detention Home for stealing a bicycle. When the school visitor went to the home the sister was rude and vague and the mother refused to see the visitor. It was felt by the school authorities that the boy was not a subject for the public school, but a mental case.

R.W., the younger boy was gradually becoming a chronic absentee. The judge at the Juvenile Court threatened to send the older boy to White's Institute but he did not seem frightened at the prospect. He was finally sentenced to White's Institute. The second boy was reported frequently

for absence. His mother would claim that he was ill when he was perfectly well. In the talks with his mother she was rather incoherent, erratic and flighty, alternately laughing and crying over the boy's conduct.

COMMENT: The inability of the home to control the children seems to have been due to indifference on the part of the mother. She did not seem to care whether the children attended school or not, and failed to cooperate with the school. Juvenile Court seems to have had no effect upon the children for the truancy continued. One boy was found to be mentally retarded and it is doubtful whether the strict discipline of the Boy's School at Plainfield will be effectual in curbing his tendencies. Prolonged social treatment of the children, school and home will be the only adequate means to solve the problem of truancy in this situation. Because of the laxity, indifference, and lack of control the school is justified in making use of social pressure to secure better attendance. Defective intelligence, poor home, and environment have all contributed to anti-social tendencies of these children. When the home exerts a negative influence through indifference or parents consciously evade their responsibilities the reformation must be made in the home by requiring the parents to acknowledge their obligations and if necessary by forcing them to meet them.

The problem of irregular attendance is of course

greatly enhanced when ignorance is added. The neglect so frequently manifested by parents seems not always as much a matter of indifference as of ignorance.

The lack of knowledge of child care and training on the part of the family is appalling. We found that this ignorance was not confined to the busy mother of the lower economic stratum. (15)

Parenthood does not automatically bring with it knowledge of the proper methods of rearing children. Few parents realize that delinquencies and manifestations of abnormal behavior may be due to their own attitude toward their children. In this age parental control is a problem because of the complexity of modern life, the social appeals competing with the ancient sanctions of family life. The average parent fails to recognize that life today requires different treatment than did the conditions of his youth. Failure of the parent to understand the child and parental ignorance of methods of child-training and development are prevalent. The average parent seems to have no better knowledge of child training than his grandmother had. The parent who favors mild measures is apt to shield the child from punishments that the stricter parent would mete out.

The consequences of this shielding is much worse for the child than the actual punishment. Leniency may take the further form of indifference, expressing callousness on the part of the parent. Another form of lenient discipline may merely represent the inability of the parent to make decisions or control situations. Vacillating and weak methods are reflected in dealing with the child. The parent is always seeking a lazy way out of a difficult situation. He coaxes the child when he is unwilling to do as he is told or what is expected of him instead of being firm and seeing that commands or instructions are carried out.

In many homes a great deal of laxity arises from various causes. Sometimes it is the result of physical defects, or ill health of the parent, grandparents or other guardians of the child who may be incapacitated by age, lameness, deafness, et cetera. Sometimes misguided leniency results from feebleness of minds or morals. The parent may be too dull to exercise due vigilance, too ignorant to use effective measures. As a consequence of the failure of parents to maintain discipline, or because of the lack of understanding between parents and children, or because of the children's drifting out of family life in early years conditions favorable for delinquency are developed.

A different kind of case consists of children of the



immigrant or of parents from rural communities. Coming from the impoverished countries of Europe where free education is unknown the immigrant parents do not easily understand that school education for all is not only free but compulsory and that compulsory attendance means regular attendance. It is easy for the children to go to school but not easy to grasp all at once the American standard of education. There is a confusion of standards and inadequate development of new standards. The children develop a contempt for the parent because of the double standard, that of the school and the one of the home. Truancy from school by children from such a home is the result of a situation that is intolerable to the child, who finds that the philosophy of his parent is difficult to conform to. Frequently it is the philosophy of many of these parents that they have the right to the economic service of the children. Coming as so many of them do from rural districts of their countries or from our rural communities, they have had no experience that will interpret to them the changed demand of the modern industrial community on the child.<sup>16</sup> Many of these children suffer from lack of parental care and discipline because the parents are strangers in a strange land and cannot foresee the dangers to which the children will be exposed, nor train them

---

<sup>16</sup> Breckenridge and Abbott, Delinquent Child and the Home, New York. Charities Publication Committee, New York, 1912, p. 66.

to resist temptation which appears. Such parents and those who are entirely illiterate do not appreciate the value of education or see the necessity for children attending regularly. It is easy for these parents to make sacrifices for their children to go to school, but not easy to grasp all at once the American standard of education. They do not adjust themselves to new conditions as readily as the children do and there is a gap between the social habits and traditions of the children and parents.

The following cases illustrate this situation:-

CASE 3. R. G. was a pale, anemic, undersized boy, 14 years old, with a clean, straightforward manner. His father had been born in Italy and his mother in England. She had died when R.G. was barely 6 years old. The home was a two-room house. There were two older boys in the family and all three had records of truancy, one in high school, who was marking time until he was 16. The younger boys followed in the footsteps of the older boy. R. G. was absent 45 days in one term and practically all of the absence was truancy. He was given a sentence to White's but the sentence was suspended on condition that he attended a parochial school regularly. He was transferred to a parochial school, the father explaining to the principal that whenever he had to go to court on Saturday, his best day for selling, he lost time. The boy said, "That's the trouble, you think more of your business than you do of us boys."

In a short while R. was reported again for absence. He was transferred to another parochial school but no improvement was made. The boy would stay away from home for a week at a time. A boarding place with relatives was secured, an ideal home, clean and well furnished. He became a behavior problem in the home and the relatives refused to have him longer. They felt that the father was able to live better than he did. When it was proposed to send the boy to a boarding school the father said the only school he would be willing to send him to was the Detention Home, but it was explained that the Detention Home was not a school. He did not realize

that his house was not a home that any child would want to stay in. The boy was accused of stealing a bushel of fancy potatoes and disposing of them for a very low price. His reason for the theft was because he had been accused of stealing \$6 from the home. The school visitor and teachers became convinced that R. was a liar and a thief. His conduct was so demoralizing in the parochial school that the principal declared the boy could not attend there any longer. However he was allowed to finish out the term. His father wished to have him excused until he was 16, but that was not considered wise. The last reports and notices received no response. The school visitor felt that the father was not cooperative.

COMMENT: The father, who had been reared in the rural districts of Italy had not provided for his children. By his strict discipline and cruelty he alienated the affection of his boys. Homes in which the parents fail to be interested in the children are liable to become breeding places of juvenile and adolescent delinquency. The children, disappointed and feeling that the one who would be expected to care most for them was indifferent, become very difficult to handle. The father did not understand that the community has a right to say that children under a certain age must be kept in school. The boy's truancy was a running off from what he considered an intolerable situation. The father did not realize that his was not a proper home or one that the boys could enjoy. The home conditions lacking both in physical and spiritual aspects, possessing inadequate discipline, and with little constructive guidance were causative factors. A better understanding for both children and father of what the school is asking is needed.



CASE 4. J. B., the eldest of several children was often kept home to take care of younger children. He was reported absent repeatedly and after the fourth attempt the school visitor was able to get in touch with the father where he worked but he seemed little interested in the boy's going to school. The visitor tried to impress upon him that as the boy was handicapped, having only one eye, and an education was more necessary. This made very little impression upon him.

Both parents had been born in Alabama, coming to Indianapolis from Mississippi. J. B. and R., the second boy, had been kept home on many occasions to care for the youngest and many occasions to care for the youngest child and many times they had been truants. Legal notice induced both to go back to school. The mother would give trivial excuses, for instance, oversleeping and getting up too late for school. The boys were arrested for breaking into a grocery store where they had been employed occasionally to sweep and clean up. They admitted at the trial that they had taken \$50. At the time of arrest they had spent \$16 or \$17. They were placed on probation and the father was to replace the money. Irregular attendance and truancy continued and in a week or two the boys were called to Juvenile Court for violating traffic regulations, profanity, and insolence in school. The principal felt the sentence to Plainfield should be carried out but the judge said that the boys would be given another chance.

The boys stayed out of school to pass bills in order to earn money to buy clothes, though the father was earning \$20.00 a week and the mother was working. The conduct of J. B. and his brother finally reached the point where the father filed incorrigible affidavits and obtained a decision of the judge to send J. B. to Plainfield. The younger boy stopped school on account of poor eyesight. J. B. was paroled from Plainfield in two or three months and returned to school. He was not there long before a butcher knife was taken away from him, which he brought to school to cut a boy. The principal felt that action should be taken and the school relieved of the boy's demoralizing influence. It was shown that the boy had been released for the purpose of a new trial. In spite of the fact that the boy was incorrigible he was not sent back to Plainfield. The boy was a menace to the community and a disgrace to the school. The mother was resentful and blamed the school for his behavior.

COMMENT: The boys had little parental care because their

parents were poorly educated. They needed restraint and discipline. Just as long as the home conditions and influences are not properly adjusted little hope is to be entertained for success from efforts of the school during the few hours it has control over the boy. During periods of truancy the boys associated with other delinquents, experts in committing destructive and criminal acts. They participated in what they considered alluring daredevil activities and developed expertness in stealing and evading police. Unwholesome excitement and companionship may result in the development of all the essential characteristics of the criminal. If these children are to be reformed the accounting, reporting, and follow-up must be prompt and effective. The boys would be much better off in institutions than in such a home of poor discipline.

CASE 5. R.W., age 9 was in the 1B grade and a confirmed truant, seemed to be of low grade mentality and was a behavior problem in the home. The family wished to have a mental examination made. The school doctor said he was all right physically and brighter than the average boy of his age. The mother was feeble-minded and the family had a low standard of living. The father was a laborer but was incapacitated because of a crippled hand.

When the school visitor called at the home because of irregular attendance the mother tried seriously to impress the visitor with her sincere desire to keep the children in school, but remarks conveyed the impression that she had little tact or ability to handle children. The mother heroically repeated that the teachers did not understand F. W., one of

the children.

At one time when the visitor went after R.W. to bring him to school the mother could not find soap or clean clothes. F.W. was out constantly because of gatherings in his ear. Whenever the visitor called the mother was always agreeable to everything the visitor said, but it was difficult for her to keep her attention on the subject in hand. The father came to the office and seemed to be more dependable than the mother. He felt that the mother was too indulgent to the boys, taking their part and letting them stay out of school whenever they wanted to. When the father said he would make the children attend better his wife did not volunteer any cooperation. She said the boys could come to school if it did not rain. F. W. was placed in a boarding home by one of the social agencies but was not kept long because of his filthy habits. The children's attendance at the last report was still unsatisfactory.

COMMENT: The children and mother were of low mentality. It was impossible to teach Mrs. W. her responsibility, for during the entire period it is noted that she showed an utter lack of knowledge of her duty. Mr. W. was a hardworking, honest man.

F. W. was examined for metabolism and was recommended to be placed in an institution. From the findings of the mental examination, he will be a trouble maker all of his life. He needs the advantage of a regime, stimulating and persistent. Hospitalization would also be helpful because of hyperthyroidism. In cases where feeble-mindedness or dullness below the average is found no further cause need be sought, the child being evidently out of place in school as ordinarily organized and incapable of adjusting himself to the ordinary school situation.

Pupils of dull or defective intelligence whose repeat-

ed failures in the regular classes have resulted in intense feeling of hopelessness and failure, or hatred of school work become truants. These reactions are but the natural outcome of forcing children to do work which is beyond their mental capacity. Children of low mentality cannot understand the importance of attending school regularly nor can their parents for that matter, be shown. These children were suffering also from physical defects which seriously interfered with their school success.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY: Reducing absence for trivial reasons can be brought about only by parental education of the children, for in the cases selected, the parents were responsible for the poor attendance. The parents will have to be taught to use better judgment regarding the keeping of children out of school needlessly. The ability of the family to provide, care for, guide or control a child may be seriously undermined by overindulgent or unintelligent parents. Ignorance, lack of knowledge of methods in child training, and other factors influencing parent or child have combined to make children's attendance irregular.

Indifference and low standards of families are responsible for much of the irregular attendance. Where the home exerts a negative influence through ignorance the problem is difficult enough, but it is even worse where



the parents consciously evade their responsibilities. There are always some parents who are willing to shirk their responsibilities. In such instances there is even greater need for reformation in the home by requiring the parents to realize their duties and if necessary by forcing them to meet these obligations.

The case of J. B. stands out prominently as illustrative of damage that may be done by a parent who is not only lacking in knowledge of child training but who refuses to profit by the experience of social workers trained in child welfare. We cannot hold much hope for the future of the boy. Defective intelligence, poor home environment, illiterate parents, and a lack of discipline all contributed their share.

If the child is placed on probation in the same environment and the parents are not given insight into the causes of the difficulty, they are apt to go blindly on, baffled by the entire situation. Both the home and the school often become more critical of every action because they are expected to report to some outsider. Children of low grade mentality cannot be made to realize the importance of regular attendance nor can the parents for that matter be shown. Prolonged treatment of the child, at home and school will be the only adequate means to solve the problem of truancy.

In instances where parental laxity, indifference, or

lack of control is the underlying cause of absence, the school is justified, in fact, obligated to make use of social pressure to secure attendance. The mechanical return of the truant children to school however is only one of the necessary steps involved. The surface compliance of the child, induced by threats or punishment is by no means the important thing. The effort of the department needs to be directed toward the understanding and treatment of the deeper causes. There is difficulty in dealing with parents of problem children arising from the degree or seriousness of the situation. The most constructive work can be done in the early stages but in this period the parents are not particularly concerned or alarmed. However after the case has reached a serious crisis there is usually much more parental concern and cooperation with social agencies.

### CHAPTER III.

#### ILLNESS AS A CAUSE OF IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

It has been shown that indifference and ignorance are contributory factors in irregular attendance and truancy. In fact, it is the opinion of Dr. Hugh S. Cummings of the United States Public Health Service that "the large number of physically mediocre children doing mediocre work is an indication of adult ignorance or indifference."<sup>(17)</sup> In this chapter we shall show how illness affects attendance in the public schools. According to Abbott and Breckenridge "long absences of several consecutive half days are usually due to illness."<sup>(18)</sup>

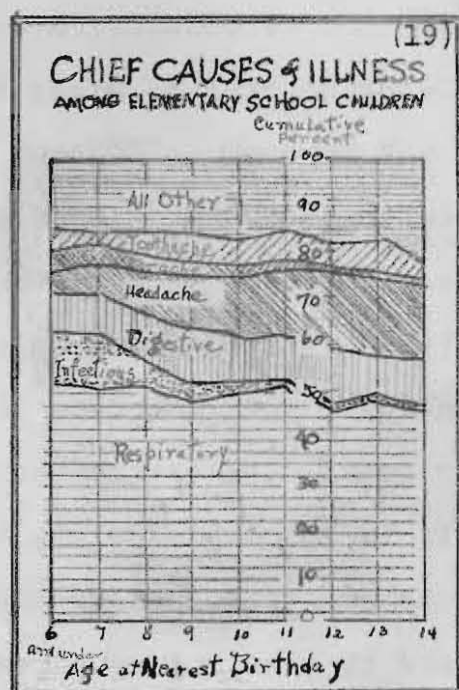
The United States Public Health Service Department has made special investigations of sickness among school children and has obtained much valuable data concerning the health of pupils. The table shown on page 31, taken from the March 1929 issue of the National Educational Association Journal illustrates how much loss of time is caused by illness.

---

<sup>17</sup>Hugh S. Cummings, Parents Magazine, Vol. 5, No. 8, August 1930, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup>Abbott and Breckenridge, Op.cit. p.119.

TABLE I.





It will be noted that the age of the children is shown along the horizontal axis of the table and the percent of illness along the vertical. From this study it has been found that health influences attendance to a great extent. As much as 4% of the school years is lost on account of illness. Colds usually account for 50% or more of the total absence. This means that colds should not be regarded lightly, but treated as an enemy and everything possible should be done to prevent the spread of this common malady. Many cases listed as sore throat, headache, earache, might be rightfully attributed to colds, directly or indirectly. Among the children from six to nine there is a greater amount of sickness, due to childhood diseases, generally infectious ailments. Croup and respiratory ailments predominate in the lower grades rather than among the older children. With increasing age there is a striking decrease in the amount of illness due to the common diseases of childhood, therefore the first four grades have a much lower attendance record on account of illness than the upper grades. In the high school age the sickness rate drops off rapidly, at least 50%.<sup>20</sup>

---

20

Hugh S. Cummings- "Disease- An Added School Burden"-  
National Educational Journal, Vol. 18, No. 3, March 1929,  
p. 93.

In the time of an epidemic it is not unusual to have half a class absent at one time with the disease, as for example, measles or whooping cough. This is true, especially in the primary grades.

As a result of the susceptibility to a large number of childhood diseases, children in the elementary schools are continuously running the gamut of impairment from the array of diseases which threaten the life of the child. (21)

Although instructing pupils to remain at home when suspicious symptoms appear, opens a way for children to pretend or feign illness, nevertheless it is better to have this happen than for one pupil to be in school when it is possible to start an epidemic. The school visitor often saves a great deal of absence by reporting cases to the nurse or the health authorities. It is the practice in the public schools of this city to have the names of all pupils who have been absent three days or more reported to the school nurse who investigates the causes of these absences. The spread of contagious diseases is prevented in this way.

As Hugh S. Cummings says-

When the teacher knows what diseases are most prevalent at the elementary school age, the age at which certain diseases are most likely to occur, the months in which the different diseases appear in the

---

<sup>21</sup> Charles C. Giaque, "How Home Makes or Mars the Health Program," Nation's Schools, Vol. IX, No. 2, Feb. 1932, p. 43.

largest number together with the common symptoms, his usefulness will markedly increase. (22)

Absences resulting from illness raise many problems for the teacher and school visitor. Sickness stands out as the largest single cause. Notwithstanding the fact that illness affects attendance in our schools there are no statistics showing the amount of time lost. No records of the number of visits made nor of cases of infectious diseases classified as to age are made. The attention of the social service department is directed only to pupils who are chronic absentees regardless of the causes. This department does not stress perfect attendance for fear of penalizing conscientious pupils and jeopardizing their health.

At the same time, parents are often inclined to be too lenient in the case of small children and keep them at home for health's sake. It is necessary at times when the school visitor meets the argument of rain, cold, slight headache, to reassure the parent by suggesting that the school nurse will promptly send the child home if his condition warrants it. Again parents uphold their children who stay out of school when they take advantage of every pain or complaint of not feeling well, realizing that illness is always a legitimate excuse.

Most cases of this kind are children who are failing or are retarded. They use every ache or pain to stay away from school. It is also noticeable that these absences are caused by the same pupils from time to time. In general, absence is a habit with them and they use sickness as an excuse when there is really nothing the matter with them. Such pupils enjoy poor health. When the school visitor finds illness in an indigent home she directs the parents to the clinic or suggests that the school nurse visit the home, make the proper investigation and recommendations for following up in the case. In the event the family is financially able, a physician of their own choice may be consulted. The visitor helps in checking the spread of diseases by notifying the school nurse of suspected cases of contagious diseases. The nurse in turn notifies the city health board which insists upon the proper protective and remedial measures to be followed by the family. There are mothers who do not take their children for regular medical or dental examinations on the assumption that these examinations are given by the school.

One of the most frequent reasons for excluding children is because of skin or scalp conditions. It is necessary that these cases be immediately followed up so that the child may be returned to school as soon as possible. In the common cases

of exclusion from school because of scabies, dirty children, or much needed bath, the school visitor may secure health habits and cleanliness by impressing upon parents the fact that such absences are illegal. Generally the child excluded is advised to return to school at the expiration of a specific number of days. If the child returns without improvement, he is excluded again and the nurse visits again or the case is reported to the school visitor. Scabies come from homes of the lowest grade. Unless the treatment is vigorously pushed the ignorant or indifferent parent makes little or no effort to get the child in condition to return.

It is not unusual to exclude children who have colds especially if accompanied by high temperatures and coughs. It is sometimes felt that one day absences are unnecessary and yet the one or two days' rest gives the child a chance to offer early resistance, thus preventing a prolonged illness. As before stated, although the number of days lost from school may be small, the accumulated absences from this type of illness result in a greater loss of time than from any other cause. Under these circumstances we can see that health and weather are closely related for most of the colds are in midwinter when the weather is severe.

The attendance of many children is so casual and irregu-



lar that it affects the pupils' success. To be absent for one day many times is often more retarding than longer absences once or twice. Absence tends to retard. Furthermore much of the illness is due to negligence on the part of the parents. There is always an undue amount of absence on Monday or the days following holidays, the illness or indisposition being traceable to irregular habits and over-eating. Headaches and similar complaints result.

Abbott and Breckenridge found that:

The great majority of children absent on account of sickness seem to have only trivial indispositions, and a very small number of children were bedfast. In a considerable number where the mother would say the child was sick, the investigator felt that the absence was due rather to carelessness or indifference. For example the child had overslept in the morning or the mother had not got the necessary clean clothes ready. In many cases the child was ill because his physical needs had not been properly looked after, because the mother was overworked or ignorant or perhaps very poor. The child therefore, had not been taken to the dentist or had his tonsils looked after or been given some other necessary preventive treatment. Sometimes the child's undernourished condition or lack of warm clothing and shoes that would have kept his feet dry had made him susceptible to colds and other illnesses. (23)

There are always some parents who are eager to shirk their duties as parents in meeting their responsibilities.

In the last analysis, the home, not the school

---

<sup>23</sup> Abbott and Breckenridge, Op. cit., p. 129-30

is responsible for the health of the child. Very often the parents are quite willing to shift the responsibility on to the school for the health of their children as soon as they reach school age. (24)

The following cases show that health influences attendance to a great extent. It may be seen also that overindulgent parents and those ignorant of child-care are largely responsible for the absences caused by illness.

CASE 1. T. H. was reported to the school visitor repeatedly for absence. An older sister was kept home to attend another member of the family who was ill. T.H. was present only sixty days out of the ninety days of the term. He was weak in his studies and needed medical attention, but the parents refused to do anything or allow the nurse to have anything done. I. H. , a second daughter, spent twenty-four weeks in different hospitals, the Methodist, Riley and City Hospitals. She had three mastoid operations. The mother had little control over the children, letting them do as they pleased. The children were finally excluded because of scabies. J. H., one of the boys had an excellent mind and would have made wonderful progress if he had attended regularly. The parents finally promised to take the children to the dispensary.

COMMENT: This case illustrates the overindulgent parents who fail to carry out the health program of the school. In their ignorance they would not allow the nurse to help the children. The school nurse has been most efficient in reducing the number of children excluded from school. By treating minor ailments and diseases she has prevented an enormous

---

<sup>24</sup> Charles C. Giauque, Op cit. p. 43

amount of non-attendance. If the parents fail to follow the suggestions or the health program either because of poverty or unwillingness to co-operate, the health of the children may suffer seriously. Lack of parental control is a factor of serious consequence. Children have too much freedom and too little judgment to act wisely. Accordingly they fall into unhygienic habits of eating and living. It is obvious that the school can have little influence upon the formation of proper health habits on the part of children if they are confronted by wrong habits in the home.

CASE 2. W.B. had a statement from the doctor excluding her because of a "breaking-out". The mother said it was caused by an infection of the throat. The school received notice that the girl should be excluded for the remainder of the term. The mother believed in faith healing and was not willing for the girl to go to Sunnyside. Later she was excused from school when tuberculosis developed.

COMMENT: This case shows that the mother did not co-operate in helping the school use preventive measures necessary to save the girl's health. Health crusades and programs are of practically little value unless co-operation of the home is secured. The staff of school nurses as well as the visitors are keenly alive to the necessity of rendering health protection and remedial health service to children and parents.

CASE 3. V.F., a very intelligent little girl, is

compelled to lose a great deal of time out of school through no fault of her own. An older brother died of a venereal disease and V.F. is excluded at intervals because of having contracted the disease from her brother. Another member of the family became ill with tuberculosis and was unable to attend school. The girl has a keen mind and is heartbroken every time she is excluded.

COMMENT: V. F. is a victim of unfortunate circumstances. Children in poor homes are frequently handicapped physically and this inheritance of a feeble body makes it difficult for them to progress in school like normal children. The chief fundamental causes of subnormality and malnutrition are poverty and ignorance. Poverty implies poor and insufficient food, poor housing, and inadequate physical attention and neglect. Instruction in sanitation and hygiene should be stressed or emphasized as a preventive measure as well as a curative procedure. The social aspect of education should receive more attention. The importance of cleanliness, hygiene, sanitation, and other items of value cannot be too highly stressed. Such instruction is so fundamental that it should rank as a most essential preventive measure. Children should be taught to take intelligent care of themselves and parents should do all they possibly can to follow the program of treatment.

CASE 4. W.M. had a good home and his mother seemed

anxious to co-operate. He was reported absent from the high school he was attending and his mother was called to school when he was reported for "cutting" classes. She claimed that most of his absences were due to illness, for he had defective tonsils and adenoids. The boy's attitude was indifferent for although, both the school and family physician had ordered the tonsils and adenoids removed the mother had refused. The boy was reported several times and the school visitor found upon investigation that the mother allowed him to stay at home the next morning when he had been running around at night with a neighborhood gang. After repeated absences and irregular attendance W. M. was allowed to stop attending school at the age of 16.

COMMENT: The mother, though able financially, to have the boy looked after was too indulgent to have the necessary operation for the removal of his tonsils and adenoids. Those in charge of the health program need co-operation, for certainly a healthy child helps to improve and maintain a high average daily attendance. Permission must be secured from the parents to allow the operation but if they object, practically nothing can be done. Diseased tonsils constitute one of the most fruitful sources of possible permanent damage to the children. Every possible effort of every one concerned with the health of children should be exerted to the end of convincing parents of their duty to their children in this matter.

CASE 5. C.T.'s parents are dead, but Mr. and Mrs. T. took her when she was very young. School authorities reported C. absent for several days at the time. The school visitor was told that the girl was too sick to attend school, having a cold and needing suitable clothing. Nevertheless



she had been seen at church and on the street. When questioned about her absence she told the school visitor that she had been ill in bed and was just getting strong enough to return to school. The girl's attendance was so irregular that she was demoted. It was the opinion of the school visitor that the child was tubercular. Facts revealed by questioning and investigation substantiated this belief and revealed that the girl was having only one meal a day, sometimes consisting of only one vegetable. Both the teacher and school visitor felt that there was a very definite health situation in regard to the girl in spite of the assertion of the foster mother that there was nothing wrong with the girl. The mother refused to let the school nurse or doctor look after her although she was out of school constantly.

COMMENT: This case is another illustration of how health affects the attendance, especially the common cold. These colds had been allowed to go on to such a length that the girl's health was impaired. Malnutrition and ignorance on the part of the mother have aided to a large extent in increasing irregularity. Remedial official service is needed for children unable to secure private medical treatment and whose physical condition is responsible for repeated absences and ill health. Further time to interview parents, possibly to instruct them concerning the child's health is needed in this case. Notwithstanding the benefits of both curative and preventive measures there is altogether too much widespread indifference on the part of parents. They should assume responsibility for the health development of their children. We may safely assume that much of the indifference

to health is due either to lack of information or to unwillingness to learn.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION. In spite of the fact that there is much irregular attendance some of which seems unnecessary, relatively little information is available. Probably on no other problem of equal importance is there so little general information. School nurses do not keep any record or data concerning visits made to the homes of the pupils and only flagrant violators of school attendance are brought to the attention of the school visitors.

An examination of the cases described in this chapter shows the health influences attendance to a great extent. In the light of the data it may be said there is too little care in avoiding and correcting the cause of absence, too little observance of health rules in the home. Not a little of the illness is due to negligence and indifference, not to say ignorance on the part of the parents.

Very little of the absence is of a serious nature. The greatest factor in non-attendance is the common cold. Contagious diseases cause most of the absence especially in the lower grades. A close follow-up by the school nurse diminishes much of the illness. Remedial official health service for children unable to secure private medical attention

should be available. Health and psychological departments are valuable accessories to the school system. Since illness is an outstanding cause of absence every teacher, school nurse, and visitor should be vitally interested in the health of pupils. There is too much preventable absence, too much irregularity of attendance interrupting the school program. If school absenteeism is to be reduced competent health supervision of all pupils must be conducted. The teacher will have to be alert to detect pupils with acute illness and those developing communicable disease. She must understand that physical defects are related to truancy and delinquency and must strive to prevent potentially useful citizens becoming serious social liabilities.

## CHAPTER IV.

### POVERTY AS A CAUSE OF IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY.

It has been shown that health and attendance are closely related and that illness is an important factor in irregular attendance. Another important cause is poverty which often prevents the children of the very poor from being able to receive the full benefit of school. "Poverty may be most conveniently defined to mean earnings insufficient for the maintenance of bodily health, a bare subsistence." (25)

Poverty generally means bad housing conditions, lack of sanitation in the vicinity, and lack of attractive community institutions. It generally means both parents away from home for long hours with the fatigue, lack of control of children, and irritation that goes with these. (26)

---

<sup>25</sup> Cyril Burt, The Young Delinquent New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1925, p. 64.

<sup>26</sup> Edwin H. Sutherland, Criminology, Philadelphia and London, J. B. Lippencott Company, 1924, p. 169.

The White House Conference Committee from their findings reported that-

Poverty is responsible for failure to provide sufficient food, suitable clothing, proper living conditions, needed medical and surgical treatment, and the exposing of children to immorality and immoral associations. (27)

Abbott and Breckenridge found that nine-tenths of the delinquent girls and three-fourths of the boys came from homes of the poor.<sup>28</sup> Hiatt found that 36% of the truants lived in poor neighborhoods, 32% in squalid, neglected surroundings.<sup>29</sup>

In spite of the fact that poverty is such a potent factor in social problems, little authoritative and reliable statistical information is available. It is difficult to interpret statistics for problem children or truants from well-to-do homes. Seldom are they referred to the social service department of the school system; poor children are probably more often brought to the attention of the school authorities. On the basis of rough classification of eco-

<sup>27</sup> White House Conference Section IV, Op.cit. p.124

<sup>38</sup> Abbott and Breckenridge, Op Cit, p. 176.

<sup>29</sup> James S. Hiatt, Op Cit, p. 17.



economic status Healy and Bronner reported that they found poverty present in about 20% of 4,000 cases studied in Chicago and Boston. They have defined poverty as a constant struggle to make ends meet.<sup>(30)</sup>

In writing about poverty Mangold says:-

The factor of poverty cannot be accurately weighed but its importance is evident. The bulk of delinquent children come from the ranks of those who are either below the poverty line or are resting rather insecurely above it. The poor and very poor are often responsible for their poverty but their children are not to blame. Poverty means inferior homes, bad housing, inadequate recreation, and other disadvantages. <sup>(31)</sup>

The percentage of children coming from poor homes is shown in the following table:-

TABLE II.

Type of home	Number	Percent
Comfortable . . . . .	4	8
Poor . . . . .	21	42
Very poor . . . . .	25	50
Total . . . . .	50	100

<sup>30</sup> White House Conference, Op. cit., p. 353.

<sup>31</sup> George B. Mangold, Problems of Child Welfare, New York The MacMillan Company, 1925, p. 414.

An examination of this table will reveal that the largest percent came from homes in straitened circumstances.

There are many causative factors, the most important of which are sickness, accident, unemployment, and insufficient income.

To quote from the White House Conference report:

Sickness is an important element in reducing family life to a level at which all the things that are necessary for the normal development of children can no longer be provided. . . In cases of long continued illness, such as tuberculosis, it exhausts the resources of the family, bringing dependence upon public or private aid, and making impossible wise investment in health, recreation, and education of children. . . .Various types of irregular unemployment are a major factor in privation and want among children. (32)

During the last five or six years unemployment has been widespread and many families formerly fair or comfortable have been reduced to a lower economic level.

Unemployment bears most heavily in families of fathers in the lower income levels. They attempt to meet it by exhausting their savings and the mothers and older children who are taken out of school seek employment. When their earnings are not sufficient, credit becomes exhausted and the result is a dangerous saving on food, clothing, and fuel. Shoes give out and the children cannot go to school.

Health needs are ignored. Lodgers are taken in or the family moves to cheaper quarters, and finally charitable aid is sought. The loss of family morale, discouragement of parents, and the extra strain on the mother have direct and disastrous result on the welfare of the children. (33)

TABLE III.

Economic Status	Number	Percent.
Employed; income adequate . . . . .	1	2
Employed, but income inadequate. . . .	15	30
Spasmodic employment. . . . .	5	10
Unemployed; aided by relatives . . . .	4	8
On relief . . . . .	25	50
Total. . . . .	50	100

These percentages point out to what straits most of the families have been reduced and how poverty has caused so much distress.

Scenes of neglect, misfortune and privation are familiar sights to the school visitor. Fears of degradation, moans, and bewailings are common in shacks, hovels, and lean-to's where disease, filth, and neglect are the inseparable companions to misery. These spectacles cannot fail to convince one that irregular attendance and truancy are due fre-

quently to vicious and poor home environment. Children, accustomed to such surroundings can scarcely be expected to see things from the angle with which the more fortunate view the world at large. Resentment rises in the child when taken to task for coming to school unkempt or dirty, conditions which seem perfectly natural to him and a sense of inferiority and dissatisfaction, even antagonism to school and society in general, originate forthwith. The only wonder is that so large a proportion of school children do regularly find their way into the schoolroom.

Most parents provide for their children according to their knowledge, ability or means. Abbott and Breckenridge write-

Whenever conditions are unfavorable to child-life the school suffers from non-attendance and the violation of school rules which come with children from extremely poor, undisciplined homes. Large numbers of children in the poorer districts of the city are insufficiently clad, and often improperly fed or underfed. Many others suffer from discomforts and find the prospect of drifting idly and listlessly about the streets and alleys, instead of being subjected to the discipline of school, a temptation unable to resist. (34)

Furthermore, another contributory factor is the employment of the mother away from home. Attendance problems

---

<sup>34</sup> Abbott and Breckenridge, Op. Cit. 332

arise, due to the fact that children are put on their own responsibility and they drift into irregular habits. Mothers who work in order to supplement the income of the husbands are forced to neglect their children. The children are left to their own devices. Frequently both parents go to work before seven o'clock in the morning, leaving no one to send the children to school or to direct them during the day. Inevitably, whenever the mother goes out to work the home is cheerless and untidy, and the children have every opportunity to stay away from school and to live the life of the street which is so alluring and demoralizing. They are too young to be depended on to do what they should. The result is natural for most children, uninstructed, and neglected as these are, to prefer playing to school. From this type of homes there is much truancy and irregular attendance. When both parents are breadwinners the children are frequently neglected, sometimes unavoidably. Numbers of children come to school without breakfast and for lunch they buy candy, pickles, and ice cream. Improper food and lack of suitable clothing lower the vitality and school life becomes distasteful. Truancy results and many spend the entire day in show-houses and in roaming the streets.

In some cases pride prevents the parents from admitting the need of clothing for their children. Fear of ridi-



cule and a sense of inferiority make children indifferent and irregular in attendance.

As has been noted where the income is inadequate to provide food, clothing, fuel, and the necessities of life there is not much left for books or shoes. The social service department is requested to furnish books, clothing, and shoes to hundreds of children. It is astonishing how many children are absent on account of shoes. Frequently when the shoes go literally to pieces during the week, the child has to wait for the school visitor to replace them or for the parent to have a pay day before a new pair can be bought. The new shoes are not bought before the old ones are beyond repair usually. Although the board of education is not in the business of dispensing charity, it is responsible for the clothing of many children and the shodding of bare feet. The one great public institution which makes provision for all children is the public school and in the future social as well as educational service must reach the children from these poverty-stricken homes or a new public authority must be created with a broader understanding of children's needs.

Mangold points out that-

The factor of poverty is perhaps most basic. Lack of opportunity, lack of capacity for self expression, inability to live a life in accord with one's inner promptings and constant gnawing of unsatisfied desire- all these are short-comings that may be transmuted into abjection or resentment or anti-social behavior. (35)

In summation Abbott and Breckenridge believe that -

So long as vast numbers of people find it difficult and at times impossible to provide adequate food and clothing for the children so long will many children find it impossible to attend school. (36)

An examination of the following cases will make this clear:

CASE 1. A. B. made no effort to do anything in school, receiving a few passing grades and having fifteen absences in one semester. When he was taken to Juvenile Court he promised to attend regularly and agreed to everything anyone said. No one knew his true attitude. Later he ran away. He was picked up with another high school pupil in Louisville and returned to Indianapolis. He was finally sentenced to White's Institute.

C. D., another child of the family was accused of stealing two automobile tires. He was sent to the Detention Home after staying away from home awhile. He started out in the same way as his brother, becoming a problem the first year in high school. His companions exerted a bad influence over him. The father's wages had been reduced from fifty dollars a week to fourteen. The children of the family were discontented because they were obliged to give up the things they were formerly accustomed to. The family was in straitened circumstances. The only reason given for the boys' running away was the financial condition. The state of affairs

---

35 George B. Mangold, Social Pathology, p. 498-  
New York, Mac Millan Company, 1932.

36 Abbott and Breckenridge, Op. Cit., p. 352.

became so serious that the father asked help of the State Board of Charities regarding the boys and stated that he was unable to cope with the situation. The boy, A.B., was examined at the psychological clinic. The diagnosis was constitutional psychopathic inferiority, incorrigible with incipient tendencies. Institutional care with rigid disciplinary measures was advised by the psychiatrist. He was finally put on probation to the Juvenile Court.

COMMENT: This case illustrates that children are truants from school because of the economic condition of the parents. Trouble at home often leads to truancy but in this case it is truancy from home as well as from school- in short, running away from what the boy felt was an intolerable situation. Family conditions that create dissatisfaction easily bring about some unsocial expression of self assertion. The boys in this case felt that they were inferior in some respect as compared to their former living. To get their minds off their disadvantages and deprivations they turned to bad behavior and truancy. Any kind of experience that seems to the child to destroy the respect of his fellows or to bring him into social disfavor tempts him to bad conduct. Poverty sometimes makes a boy eager to bully and to practice stubborn disobedience. The badly dressed boy not only enjoys picking on the child that wears better clothes than he does but he is most happy when he achieves leadership by defying authority. His inner protest goads him

to act the hero and win the admiration of those more fortunate than he.

The boys may have been truants in order to preserve their sense of adequacy by escaping from a situation in which their inferiority was constantly being magnified. Experience has proved that much of the truancy is caused by intrapsychic conflict traceable to the home situation. This factor might be suspected in cases where children of average intelligence is apparently unmotivated by some misunderstanding between the child and the school. Truancy may have been caused by inadequate clothing which engendered a sense of shame in the boys.

CASE 2. H.- a family of seven children lived in a poor neighborhood. The standard of living was very low, and the general atmosphere was wretched. The father, an elderly man, 70 or 75 years of age, had been hurt in an accident and was unable to work. He stayed at home while his wife age 34, went out and did laundry work. She earned about \$2.00 a week and the family could not have managed it without the aid of a church nearby and social agencies. The wife was in a good physical condition but the children were undernourished and the school nurse had wanted to have tonsils and adenoids removed. The social service department was asked to furnish books. The school visitor was informed by the principal and nurse also that the family had had a great deal of trouble at school because of their dirty condition. The water had been turned off and had to be carried from next door. The mother was unable to buy the fourteen books needed by the children. The father became ill and his illness lasted eight months. The oldest girl attending high school, stayed out frequently because of her father's illness,

but sometimes roamed the streets in bad company. Some of the time she spent in various stores down town and in the rest rooms reading. C., one of the boys, was out of school because of having no shoes. The family had not reported his need of shoes on account of being concerned about the girl. The oldest girl, it was felt by the school visitor, had too much responsibility in looking after the family in the mother's absence. Although the children were in the normal age groups at school it was felt that they might become subnormal because of lack of nourishment.

The two younger children were excluded from school on account of the itch. At a later date the family was found living in a dilapidated old shack in a very poor neighborhood. Both parents were barefooted and in a filthy condition. The mother tried to excuse her plight by saying she had forgotten to order soap in her last basket. The father eventually secured work on a government project and felt that he would be able to care for his family again. At the last call of the school visitor the father said there was no excuse for the children's absence for he was earning \$12.00 a week.

COMMENT: This case shows how poverty causes discord and despair in a family. A poor home environment in which home study facilities are absent contribute to truancy by reason of the fact that the child is loath to attend classes when his work is poorly prepared. The girl who was a truant spent her time watching questionable movies and enjoying an existence without effort. A life of this kind is of the type leading into sex delinquency. If she is to be protected at the outset from such experiences the school system of pupil accounting, reporting and follow-up of tru-



ants must be prompt and effective. The children of the family were the victims of a squalid and unhappy home, exposed to neglect, quarreling, repeated threats and punishments. Studies of personal and family history and social background have emphasized the importance of home environment, of family relationship, and of destructive social forces in the production of delinquency. If there could be an elimination of poverty, unemployment, poor homes, bad housing and ill-health; of vicious, ignorant and incompetent parents; if there could be added to our schools social activities to meet the needs of these children the attendance of the schools would be greatly improved. Not only must the causes of irregularity be learned but the co-operation of the parents must be enlisted and the child's point of view and attitude must be changed. Relief and indiscriminate giving will not solve a problem of this type for it only tends to pauperize the family. The family deteriorated as their poverty-stricken condition became more abject. Children are not contented or normal if their parents are miserable, and parents must be miserable if they cannot protect a home against poverty. The ability to maintain a decent family living standard is essential for child welfare. This means a living wage and wholesome working life for the man, a good

and skillful mother at home to keep house and minister to the needs of the children.

CASE 3. The A- family consisted of three children besides father and mother. The mother complained to the school visitor that the husband would stop on his way home and drink up most of his wages. When he lost his job the utilities were cut off and the rent was months in arrears. The children were out of school because of lack of clothing and shoes. The family was obliged to move into smaller quarters for which a social agency paid the rent. Books and clothing were furnished on request of parents.

The teacher of the fresh-air room reported that she was having trouble with one of the boys about the lunch which was served. She felt that the mother did not co-operate sufficiently and that she kept the boy at home without any excuse. The school visitor called at the home and found the mother ill in bed with a coat on and no fire or coal in the house. The two front rooms were rented out and the family lived in the rear. The smaller children were running around out of doors with no shoes on and in a wretched condition. The mother was urged to take steps to make the husband do better but for 19 years he had been drinking and neglecting his family, and she had become disheartened. They were borrowing coal from the neighbors and there was no food in the house except some potatoes. A charity organization furnished the children with some badly needed clothing. The oldest boy was sent to the drug store for medicine for his mother and on his way went to the place where his father was gambling. The father took the boy into the game. When the mother awakened at midnight she went after him and brought him home. The father was warned by his employer that unless he did better he would be dropped from the payroll. The next fall the principal reported to the school visitor that the father had lost his job. He claimed that his children needed clothing and he was going to keep them home until they were supplied. When the visitor called she found him at home in a very belligerent attitude. He seemed to be more intelligent than his wife who might have been an inspiration to him if she had been cleaner and more industrious.

COMMENT: This case is illustrative of poverty as a factor in irregular attendance and truancy. It is impossible to keep a destitute family from suffering even with the help of social agencies when the income is inadequate. The family deteriorated as their poverty became more abject. In this case, as with the other two, just described, the patience and endurance became apathy and incapacity to struggle to eke out an existence. The mother's resignation to the state of affairs paralyzed her efforts to better her condition and the children became anti-social by way of escape.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY. These families show how truants and children who are irregular in attendance belong to families in which poverty and the struggle to exist is more or less acute. The children suffered from neglect because of the poverty-stricken condition of the family. The parents were unable to provide the proper clothing or the necessities of life and became discouraged. The children rebelled or ran away from an intolerable situation. These cases show also how necessary it is to keep in touch with families where conditions are interfering with the regular attendance of children. Many children suffer from neglect because of poverty and mothers employed away from home is a

contributory factor. In homes where both parents are wage earners there is often neither supervision or restraint. The child is left a prey to the evils that are inevitable. The factor of poverty is an important factor in the problem of irregular attendance and truancy. Indiscriminate relief however, causes many of the families to cease to be independent and to depend upon charity entirely. The school visitor in following up indigent families and making persistent efforts necessary for the prevention of non-attendance, renders invaluable service.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE EFFECT OF THE BROKEN HOME UPON IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

In the foregoing chapters it has been shown that indifference and ignorance, illness, and poverty are causative factors in irregular attendance and truancy. None of these causes, however, presents a problem of such difficulty as is presented by those children who come from broken homes - the children who are fatherless, motherless or wholly orphaned. A broken home may be defined as follows: "A broken home has been classified as broken, if one or both the parents are dead, divorced, separated, or have had their marriage annulled."<sup>(37)</sup> The broken home has been shown by scientific study and research to cause more delinquency than any other circumstance. The so-called broken home appears in nearly one third of all the delinquency cases which

---

<sup>37</sup> Quoted by H. T. Riley- Effect of the Broken Home  
Unpublished Thesis Butler University, 1931.



come before the juvenile court. Hiatt in his study of truancy in Philadelphia found that twenty-five out of the one hundred cases had no father in the home and eleven were motherless. In Chicago 50% of the cases studied parental conditions were not normal and conditions were marred by death, desertion, divorce, poverty and degeneracy.<sup>38</sup> Mangold says:

Homes are broken up in many ways, the most important of which are death of one or both parents, desertion or divorce. The last two causes are also results and imply delinquencies among parents and these furnish additional reason for waywardness of children. Many homes are broken by death, and orphans are left without adequate care, many being brought into court. The half orphans are more numerous however. A majority of these have lost their fathers while the mothers are still alive. In many cases the surviving parent marries again but the step-parent cannot take the place of the deceased. Accordingly, the children in such a home frequently suffer from neglect and drift into delinquency. (39)

When the family becomes disorganized and disrupted the children are the chief sufferers. As a result of the parents' separation, the home is broken up, and the children are deprived of the counsel, companionship of the father, or the care and devotion of a mother. Any breakdown in the function-

---

<sup>38</sup>

Quoted by Albert Alexander Owens- Thesis- The Behavior Problem Boy, Philadelphia, 1929, p. 66.

<sup>39</sup>

Mangold, Op. Cit., p. 406

ing of the family has a direct and unwholesome effect upon the development of the children. Social workers and school visitors have found a high correlation between the broken home and delinquency. In the case of most delinquent children the home has failed to perform its proper office. As before pointed out a large number of children have lost only one parent but this misfortune creates a difficulty for the surviving parent in trying to be both father and mother. When the father attempts to carry on the task of training the children along with supporting the family, the result is not quite so disastrous to the children for the oldest girl can frequently take the mother's place or a housekeeper may be hired until he remarries. When the mother tries to work and support the family the home becomes cheerless and disorderly and the children neglected. They have every opportunity to stay away from school and roam the streets. In short, when death, desertion or imprisonment of a father forces the wife to assume the duties of a breadwinner, she necessarily has to sacrifice her activities as a mother and home maker. Her children are left without her care and guidance during the greater part of the day.

In addition to the homes broken by death are those

which divorce, separation, or desertion have left the child practically orphaned. Usually from 60 to 90% of the children in court and institutions come from inadequate, broken or vicious homes. This means that one or both parents are missing. Step-parents do not seem to help much; on the contrary, they seem to contribute to delinquency by causing friction, demoralizing to the children.

The broken home is an important factor in causing delinquency not so much in itself as the results that emanate from it. The fact that there is dissension and discord between the parents means that the child is brought up in an atmosphere which is conducive to delinquency. This is true to a greater extent in the case of the death of the father than when the mother dies. A child who comes from a home broken through dissension has relatively less encouragement toward a proper adjustment in life than has the child who loses his parent by death. The atmosphere is one of disharmony and strife, and the lack of affection between the parents and other emotional problems make it impossible to satisfy the child's fundamental needs for security and development. It is a matter of common agreement that truancy is often an early symptom of a child's maladjustment at home or

in school. It is not unusual for the children to be shifted back and forth between two people, who, they cannot help knowing, are at odds. They are torn by conflicting loyalties and deprived of the sense of security and belonging, so important to normal development of children. In some cases they are deprived of all contact with one of the parents and live with relatives or in foster homes.

Parents who are continually fighting and quarrelling certainly do not set a good example for their children. Yet when the home is formally dissolved and the children allotted to one or the other parent the consequences may even be more serious. The mother may find that she, alone, is unable to properly discipline her children, and that they are becoming unmanageable. If the father is given the custody of some of the children he is unable to care for them while at work with the result that they are often neglected. When children are shifted about from one person to another the stability of normal family life is lost and divided affections and bad dispositions are apt to result. (40)

Conflict and tension among members of the family lower the effectiveness of family control over the child. Deprived of normal home influences and the continuous guidance of both father and mother, a division of feelings toward parents, sensitiveness, mental conflicts, and a sense of inferiority,

---

<sup>40</sup> Eldridge, Seba and Clark, Carrol D., Major Problems of Democracy, Century Company, New York, 1928, p. 18

result in a lack of concentration,unsatisfactory school work, irregular attendance,and truancy.

When there is only one parent he can, with difficulty, if at all, furnish comfort, guidance,and control required of both father and mother in a home. Children living with relatives and grandparents in a number of cases are illegitimate and thus are robbed of the first step toward normal family life. The neglected child is the natural result when only one parent remains to keep the home together.

Studies of personal and family history and social background of delinquents have revealed the importance of home environment, of family relationships,and of destructive social forces in producing delinquents. The following table shows to what extent the broken home is prevalent. Of the fifty cases investigated the majority came from broken homes.

TABLE IV.

Type of Home	Number	Percent
Unbroken Homes . . . . .	8	16
Homes broken by desertion . . . . .	15	30
Parents divorced . . . . .	9	18
One parent dead . . . . .	7	14
Both parents dead. . . . .	2	4
Parent remarried. . . . .	6	12
Other causes. . . . .	3	6
Total . . .	50	100

Analysis of the type of the broken homes shows that in the



majority of broken homes desertion was prevalent. In three cases roomers and questionable situations were involved. The causes that produce broken homes are so numerous that no one factor may be said to be the cause. Economic conditions play an important part. Often the home becomes little more than a lodging place or boarding house where members of the family see little of each other. Low wages cause financial worries and endless friction in many families.

Queen and Mann say:-

Practically all of the difficulties incident to widowhood and divorce are present in intensified form in the case of the deserted wife with small children, and demoralization which sometimes results in many respects the same. The struggle to support the family is often much more severe, for while widows frequently receive pensions and divorced wives receive alimony there is often no aid of this kind for the deserted wives. Many deserted mothers in attempting to provide for their children work for meager wages outside the home. The children are, in consequence, often undernourished, neglected, and without parental supervision. Truancy and juvenile delinquency result. (41)

Reckless and Smith do not agree entirely with Queen and Mann as to the importance of the broken home. They write:-

It is well to recognize that the broken homes do not necessarily have an ill effect at all. Consequently Shaw and McKay came to the conclusion that it was not the break in the formal organization of the family but rather the cumulative effect of internal family

discord which usually operated as a causative factor in delinquency. In other words, the break might solve as many problems as it creates, but conflict and tension lower the effectiveness of family control over the child. (42)

When the home is immoral the situation is worse for the child than if he were separated entirely from his parents. The fundamental importance of a good home is well recognized by everyone. Frequently bad home conditions are made worse by the presence of drunken, immoral, epileptic, insane or feeble-minded parents. Too often the home is the source of demoralization.

Broken and disrupted homes contribute a large proportion of delinquents and truants. The social service department has a distinct opportunity for constructive work in the prevention of delinquency, for tendencies of the thousands of juvenile delinquents first become evident in school maladjustment and truancy. The period of truancy usually means the introduction and habituation of children to all types of crime. The boys associate with other truants and with gangs expert in stealing, and other misdemeanors. They bum rides, stay away from home, participate in alluring and thrilling escapades and developing skill in evading police. Un-

wholesome excitement and questionable companionship, constant thrills, and the sense of being hunted and of eluding the pursuer may result in the development of all the characteristics of the criminal.<sup>43</sup>

An examination of the following cases show the effect of family disorganization, including family tensions, and inadequacy of parents' economic situation.

CASE 1. W- a family of eleven children, has been known to the social service since 1926 when the father got into trouble and left home. H. W., one of the girls was referred to the authorities as a conduct problem, and four of the boys were placed in the Orphans' Home. The school visitor felt that the family background and home conditions were the chief causes of the girl's misbehavior. During the father's imprisonment the department furnished groceries, clothing, and books. At the expiration of the sentence the children were returned home. The father felt that he would be able to take care of his family and realized that his wife should not have all the responsibility of the children, especially the boys, for they were hard to control. He was able to secure work and received fair wages. The family had incurred a number of debts which he tried to pay. The children had poor records of attendance which the mother ascribed to laziness. One of the boys was sent to Plainfield and another was a confirmed truant. As soon as the children reached sixteen they dropped out of school.

COMMENT: This case illustrates the broken home and the mother the sole wage earner while the husband was imprisoned. The family is of a very low type, the father spending most of the time in prison. The home conditions are very

---

<sup>43</sup> Basset, Clara, Mental Hygiene in the Community-  
New York, MacMillan Company, 1934, Op. Cit., p. 220-222

poor. The children are neglected, dirty and most of the time unsupervised. In this case it is shown that the loss of the wages of the father worked a hardship on the mother, for in working to support the family the home was neglected and children left to their own devices. The children needed the care and attention of both parents.

Personal or family conditions, that create mental dissatisfaction of any sort as a result of the suffering they produce bring about anti-social behavior or unsocial expression of self assertion. These children as they reached adolescence realized that they were seriously handicapped and inferior in some respects to their school mates. In this case family disorganization, including family tensions, inadequacy of parents' economic situation, demoralization of the breadwinner caused the loss of respect of the children for the parents. Furthermore to know that a parent is immoral or a criminal is enough to turn a child's thoughts toward crime. To lose respect for one's parents is to lose respect for oneself and everyone.

CASE 2. The H- family lived in a five-room house for which they paid \$18 a month. The father was dead. There were three children, two girls and a boy of school age. The mother had no work and was being taken care of by an uncle. Apparently the family tried to maintain a fair standard of living. The mother was keeping roomers, but there was only one, and the school visitor felt that there was a question of morals in the situation.

The mother said she had always had trouble in keeping the boy in school regularly. He had stayed with his grandparents part of the time and would not attend school regularly when living with them. She would send him to school but instead of going he would go to the home of the grandparents where he would stay several days before he was located. The mother was anxious to cooperate with the school but could not control the boy. The relatives were warned that in the eyes of the law they were contributing to delinquency to which a severe penalty is attached. They agreed to stop interfering and the boy promised to attend school better. The promise was not kept and the boy stayed out of school as usual. The mother became ill but when the grandmother was asked to keep the boy for a while she refused. Her attitude was very unfriendly toward the mother as well as the school visitor. The mother felt that if the boy was going to be in her care and under her supervision the grandparents should not permit him to stay at their home without going to school. She was willing to care for the boy if he was willing to be disciplined, but if the grandparents continued to interfere they should take the entire responsibility, and see that he stayed in school. The mother asked the school visitor to handle the case in the best way that she could. The boy was sent to the Orphan's Home to await the action of the court.

COMMENT: The boy needed the counsel and discipline of a father. The discipline was inadequate and there was little constructive guidance. Since his mother could not control him an institution where he could receive proper instruction was the best solution. Living with relatives and separated from his mother at intervals had a more or less unsettling effect upon him and it is hardly to be expected



that right habits of discipline would be developed in such a child. When neither parent is a worthy model or as in this case, the child has no father to depend upon for guidance he becomes hopelessly confused and impotent. If parents are willing or able to co-operate the child is better left with them under official supervision. In the case where parents are unwilling and unable to co-operate the child is better off in an institution where he may receive proper care and guidance. There were unsavory home conditions, both in physical and spiritual aspects.

CASE 3. W. family had had a very poor attendance record since entering the public schools in 1924. The mother had served previous prison sentences for bootlegging and drunkenness and at the time of the investigation was at the Woman's Prison. R. W. was absent for two months while his mother was imprisoned. The year before he had attended school  $28\frac{1}{2}$  days the first semester and 40 days the second. His two older brothers had been in Juvenile court frequently and the mother had had little control over them. At the trial the two older daughters admitted that, J. S., a younger member of the family and the alleged child of the mother by a second marriage, was the illegitimate child of one of the girls. He was a problem case in school besides being a truant and was sent to Plainfield. T. W., another member of the family attended school ten days one term, playing around the streets and meeting a relative at school every day at three o'clock and returning home as if he had been to school.

COMMENT: The most disheartening condition is the demoralizing home. Immorality, bad language, and general wretchedness tend to set up by their effect upon the young

and sensitive mind such a sense of unhappiness that as the child grows older he finds himself impelled to vent his feelings by some misdemeanor of his own. The undisciplined child goes out of the home and soon strikes some social repression. Not having been trained in self-control he finds it difficult to endure this restraint. In this case the boys had done as they pleased and of course disregard of social responsibilities was met with punishment. A chronic state of rebellion, developing into an anti-social attitude of mind and delinquency is almost inevitable. All of the consequences resulting from a broken home are illustrated in this case. Family disorganization, inadequacy of parental control, alcoholism, and illegitimacy are evident. The failure of parents to accept moral responsibility for their children is the cause of delinquencies. The neglected child is the natural victim of such a broken home. The neglect is aggravated when only one parent remains to maintain a home. The normal relationship between the child and parent has disappeared and the single parent cannot furnish comfort, guidance, and control required of both. The failure of parents to accept the moral responsibility for the training of their children is often the logical outcome of their delinquencies. They are negligent and by example

they teach their children to lead lives of irresponsibility and delinquency. The child without parental care is likely to find life more difficult than do other boys and girls.

CASE 4. J. family, consisting of two boys and three little girls was deserted by the father. The children were placed in the Orphan's Home until the mother obtained a divorce and remarried. After the stepfather's work became irregular there was a great deal of unpleasantness in the home. Supporting the family and taking care of the children was very distasteful to him, although he had married his wife with the understanding that he was to assume the obligation. He complained of the boys lying around in the summer when they might have worked. The younger boy was reported for absence and when the school visitor called she found him lying on the davenport smoking a cigarette. He boasted that no one could make him go to school. His mother admitted that she could do nothing with him. She was advised to go to the Juvenile Court in regard to the boy. He finally ran away. The attendant of the Juvenile Court had a warrant made out for his arrest.

The school authorities had trouble with the three girls attending school. They were kept home whenever the weather was inclement and the mother was warned that it would be necessary to be referred to the court if the children did not attend more regularly.

The mother was obliged to go to work when her second husband deserted the family. One boy had lost his job and the other son was in Pendleton for a year. The mother was sent to Sunnyside in a few months. An aunt was unable to stay with the children as they were hard to get along with. When the mother returned from Sunnyside a social agency supplied groceries and rent. One girl stopped attending school at the age of 16 and married. The second girl did not enter school in September previous to her 16th birthday in November. The eldest son received his second sentence to Pendleton, this time for 10 to 20 years.

COMMENT: In this case the step-parent contributed to delinquency. Again we have family disorganization, tension and discord undermining the control of the children. The discipline was inadequate and there was little constructive guidance. The atmosphere was one of discord and family insolidarity. The mother was compelled to seek work and found it impossible to care properly for her children. The children were deprived of the right to develop naturally and were constantly under a nervous strain. Constant quarreling and dissension between the parents created emotional disturbances in the children especially since the boys were the source of the trouble. The situation caused a lack of respect for the character and authority of the parents.

CASE 5. The parents of the S. children were separated. C. S. reported by the high school teachers for non-attendance. The girl disliked school. While the school visitor was making a visit in the vicinity C. came in and asked her neighbor to write an excuse for her to take to school as her mother had been sick and she had had to stay at home to do the work. The school visitor took the girl to school and warned her not do that sort of thing again. A friend of the girl gave the information that the two of them had attended a drinking party the night before and had gotten drunk. C's mother was selling bootleg whiskey at the time and C. had stayed out of school several times to wait on customers. The mother had one roomer and since the father did not support the family, bootlegged for a living. The place was raided by the police and the girl was sent to the Detention home.

After the father returned he was given custody of the three children by the court and the mother was allowed to see the children once a week.

R., one of the boys was very hard to control. The father and stepmother could do nothing with him. He wished to live with his own mother and was very much dissatisfied with the state of affairs. He played truant constantly. The step-mother was very hard and severe. C. left home because she had to do all the work and could not get along with the step-mother. The father felt that the mother should assume some of the responsibility of the children and could see no reason why the boy should be compelled to go to school when not interested. When the case was taken to the Juvenile Court the judge found the step-mother disagreeable. Since there was not sufficient evidence the trial was postponed pending investigation. The children were made wards of the court and placed in mother's home. The father was ordered to pay a certain amount every week for their support.

COMMENT: Immoral conditions, discord, and divided affections contributed to the truancy of these children. Neither parent was satisfactory and neither was willing to assume the responsibility of their children. It was a choice of two evils in which home the children should be placed. The children are victims of confused family situations. Children need a feeling of security and safety and the two most important persons in their lives are father and mother. If children witness open rupture between the parents their confidence in the security of their environment is shaken. It may also lead them to



taking sides emotionally, sympathy with one and resentment toward the other. Homes in which either or both parents fail in their responsibilities are liable to become hotbeds of juvenile and adolescent delinquency. Feeling that those who would be expected to care most for them are indifferent, the boys and girls are liable to become difficult to handle. In such cases it is wisest and most economical for the state to take control of the children rather than spend more money in the reformation of confirmed criminals later.

Careful study shows that serious symptoms of social maladjustments are the result of several underlying problems, the symptom the most outstanding handiwork of each of these problems. Frequently truancy is the answer to so many underlying problems that it manifests itself persistently. It is necessary to make a prolonged and thorough investigation of the situations in order to diagnose the cause of much of the irregularity and truancy. Many children develop a tendency to resort to truancy whenever confronted with unpleasant, fear-producing or difficult situations. This reaction may grow and develop until it manifests itself as well, by avoidance of situations

demanding effort, dodging responsibility, or even running away from home and school.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION. All these cases illustrate why the broken home is the most important causative element in irregular attendance and truancy. The parents failed to accept their responsibility for the training of the children. They neglected them and by example they taught them to lead lives of irresponsibility and delinquency. There is evidence that the economic uncertainty and lack of control in the broken home are important factors in producing delinquency. In the broken home the atmosphere is one of discord and family insolidarity. When broken, the family fails in its function and some other institutions such as the Juvenile Court has to step in to perform its duty.

Following are the following conclusions:

1. Truancy is due in the majority of instances to health, economic and social reasons. Truancy is frequently related to fundamental social problems, neighborhood, family or individual.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONCLUSIONS

From the study presented in the preceding chapters it may be said that irregular attendance and truancy are affected by indifference and ignorance, illness, poverty, and the broken home. In view of the fact that the Social Service Department is inadequately manned it is felt that the underlying causes of some of the truancy cases have not been found. The White House Conference recommended a school visitor for every five hundred pupils while there is only one visitor for every two thousand children in the Indianapolis system. When the community is willing to pay for more trained workers more efficient work can be done. The case study and discussions warrant the following conclusions:

1. Absence is due in the majority of instances to health, economic and social reasons. Truancy is frequently related to fundamental social problems, neighborhood, family or individual.

2. Parental attitudes that accompany irregular attendance and truancy vary from extreme lack of interest in the child, or religious or ethical notions or permitting individualism to hatred of everything required by the school.

3. The causes range from lack of parental control leading to late hours and bad companionship; poor nutrition, unhygienic living; neurotic disorders to nervous disorders caused by aggravated financial difficulties or domestic quarrels.

4. Trivial causes of absences, such as shopping, oversleeping, and similar excuses generally occur in the intermediate grades and depend largely upon the type of the community and the general attitude regarding education. In many instances the parents must be educated.

5. The neglect so frequently manifested by parents seems not always so much a matter of indifference as ignorance.

6. There is too much preventable absence even when caused by illness. Very little of the illness of children is of a serious nature, a large portion of it being due to negligence and ignorance of the parents. The greatest factor in non-attendance is the common cold.

7. Home conditions are the major difficulty in cases

of truancy. Many children suffer from neglect because of poverty of the family and some have been sacrificed to undue thrift. Mothers working away from home, unemployment, acute distress, and dire need are found to be causative elements.

8. A number of children suffer from lack of parental care and discipline because their parents are immigrants or illiterate and cannot foresee the dangers to which the children will be exposed. Frequently they are unable to train the children to resist the temptations which appear. For these parents the children have a lack of respect.

9. Many truants have been the victims of confused family situations. Remarriage is a contributing factor for the reason that step-parents cause friction in the family. Children of immoral homes at the age of adolescence either rebel against the situation or begin to show degenerate tendencies.

10. Many children have been deprived of full parental care as a result of the illness or death of one or both parents.

Information in the different problems of family life.

3. Preventing trivial excuses can be brought about only by proper education, that is, by teaching parents to use better judgment regarding the keeping of children out of school need-



## RECOMMENDATIONS.

The following recommendations, if carried out, would improve attendance in the schools.

1. Health and psychological departments are valuable accessories to the school system. Psychological tests should be given to all truants and in cases where feeble-mindedness or dullness is found the children should be placed in special classes. Medical attention for those financially unable to have a family physician should be provided.

2. In order to attain an efficient attendance program it is necessary to secure the co-operation of parents and pupils. The attitudes of the family, especially the controls of the home, must be mobilized to support the schools in the matter of regular attendance. Family consultation centers with a staff composed of specialists in home economics, housing, psychiatry, psychology and sociology should be established. These centers should be prepared to give advice and information in the different problems of family life.

3. Reducing trivial excuses can be brought about only by parent education, that is, by teaching parents to use better judgment regarding the keeping of children out of school need-

lessly.

4. Courses in home economics should be broadened to include family budget, correct diet for all members of the family, the dressing of children, home decoration and furnishing.

5. There is a great need for courses in parenthood and child development which might be offered in the senior year of the high school. The establishment of child guidance and clinics in connection with public schools is recommended. By means of these, maladjustments could be corrected before serious troubles resulted.

6. The establishment of family consultation centers where parents could receive advice from specialists in home economics, social work, psychiatry and sociology is recommended. These centers would be prepared to give advice and information on the different problems of life.

7. Better supervision of children from broken homes is necessary. From the writer's observations and findings of scientific studies made the need for better supervision and study of this problem seems clearly to be shown.

8. Prolonged social treatment of the child, home, and school will be the only adequate means of solving irregular attendance and truancy.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbott, Edith. Social and Professional Education  
Chicago University, Chicago Press, 1931.
- Abbott, Edith and Breckenridge, S.B. Truancy and  
Non-Attendance in the Chicago Schools.  
Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago  
Press, 1917.
- Bassett, Clara. Mental Hygiene in the Community.  
New York: McMillan Company, 1934.
- Breckenridge, Sophonisba P. and Abbott, Edith.  
The Delinquent Child and The Home.  
New York: Charities Publication Committee,  
New York, 1912.
- Brown, Fred. "The Truant Child, School and Society."  
Vol. 40, No. 1041, (Dec. 8, 1934).
- Burt, Cyril. The Young Delinquent. New York:  
Appleton & Company, 1925.
- Cumming, Hugh S. "Disease An Added School Burden",  
National Educational Journal, Vol. XVIII,  
No. 3, March 1929.
- Dow, Grove Samuel. Society and Its Problems. New  
York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1920.
- Eldridge, Seba and Clark, Carrol D. Major Problems  
of Democracy. New York: Century Company,  
1928.
- Fleming, Paul. "Truancy, Why and When It Occurs",  
Nations Schools, Vol. VI, No. 5, (Nov. 1930).
- Giaugue, Charles C. "How the Home Makes Or Mars  
the Health Program", Nations Schools, Vol. IX,  
No. 2, (Feb. 1932).

- Hiatt, James S. United States Bureau of Education Bulletin. Washington, D.C., No. 29, 1915.
- Jordan, A.M. Educational Psychology. Henry Holt and Company, 1928.
- Mangold, George B. Problems of Child Welfare. New York: MacMillan Company, 1924.
- Owen, Albert Alexander. The Behavior Problem Boy- A Socio-Educational Survey, 1929, Published Thesis. Philadelphia, Pa.
- Queen, Stuart Alfred and Mann, Delbert Martin. Social Pathology. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1925.
- Reckless, Walter C. and Smith, Mapheus. Juvenile Delinquency. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1932.
- Riley, Hurlburt T. "Effect of the Broken Home", Unpublished Thesis, Butler University, 1931.
- Sullenger, Thomas E. "Juvenile Delinquency- A Product of the Home", Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, Vol. XXIV, No. 6, March-April, 1934.
- White House Conference, Section IV. The Handicapped Prevention, Maintenance, Protection. New York: The Century Company, 1932.
- Discontent with school, poor home conditions and inferior mentality were all causative factors in this boy's case.

5. The J. family lived in an eight-room house in a fair neighborhood. The house was fairly well furnished but rather run-down. The standard of living had evidently been

## ADDITIONAL CASES

1. V. M. was a large overgrown boy and attendance problem in the sixth grade. His parents had come from the South and were very illiterate. The home was in a very wretched condition both inside and out, poorly furnished and dirty. Evidences pointed to a very low standard of living. The older brothers and sisters had married and left home. The father was employed for a period at a railroad shop but was finally dismissed. The mother did work when she could get it. The family was aided by various social agencies. Books and clothing were furnished by the Social Service Department. The boy was of low mentality, and evidently disliked to go to school. His father and mother finally separated when she became addicted to drinking to the extent of staying away for weeks at the time. V. made his home later with his sister and brother-in-law. This home was not any better for they were summoned to court for fighting. Dissatisfaction with school, poor home conditions and inferior mentality were all causative factors in this boy's case.

2. The J. family lived in an eight-room house in a fair neighborhood. The house was fairly well furnished but rather run-down. The standard of living had evidently been



lowered. There were six children in the home. L., age nine, was in the 1A grade. From early childhood she had had a nervous ailment which prevented her from attending school regularly. Her I.Q. was found to be 51 on Binet test. She would fight members of the family and children in school. She was finally excluded from school and after a psychological examination institutional care was recommended.

3. S. family, very poor, came from Georgia, both parents being poorly educated. At the death of the mother, the eldest girl, age fourteen, became housekeeper. Relatives were unwilling to care for children without pay. The father had worked on a C.W.A. project, but the income was insufficient. The school visitor felt that the girl had too great a responsibility for one of her age. It was necessary to wash the clothes of the family three or four times a week. Books and clothing were furnished the family by the social service department. The children were no discipline problems and were well behaved. Poverty and the lack of a mother's care were the handicaps in this case.

4. C. and M. of the W. family were both reported out of school because of needing shoes and clothing. The standard of living was very low. The family consisted of

nine children, four of whom were in school. C. was in school only one morning of one week. The school visitor called at the home and the mother explained that the home had been raided by the police and the husband had escaped. In his absence she had been arrested but released on the condition that she find her husband. The boy had been kept home to stay with grandmother, who was ill. A promise was made to keep him in school more regularly. He was reported in a week or two again. S., a girl of the family was summoned to Juvenile court for poor attendance. On release from court she promised to attend better. She asked permission to go home and dress more suitably for school. She did not return to school and was reported to Juvenile Court again. The mother said she left every morning for school, and that she could not control the girl. The school visitor felt that the mother wanted to shirk her responsibility of rearing the girl and was anxious to get rid of her by placing her in the Girl's School at Clermont. She advised her to talk with the attendant of the Juvenile Court. Eventually the girl was sentenced to the school after entering a house on the northside and ransacking the place. She had been reported so often in the court that the sentence was not suspended this time.

5. The family of H. H. was reported to the social service department as needing shoes. The father and mother were divorced and the latter worked at a storage department of the freight house, receiving \$8 a week. The grandparents lived with the family. The father of the children had been ordered to pay the sum of \$8 a week, but had been unable to do so because of ill health. Books were provided for the three children and the township trustees furnished groceries. Mrs. H. was ordered by the court to marry the man with whom she had been living. The mother became ill and the girls were placed in the Detention Home on account of having immoral relations with the step-father. He was sent to the State farm and the girls were released to the mother.   
 6. Three children of D. family were in school and one was below school age. Father was incapacitated to some extent from crippled hand. Social agencies and social service department of school were asked for relief. The father was very sensible and rather discouraged because his wife who was feeble-minded was such a poor manager and housekeeper. They lived in a three-room house which was rather untidy. The mother did work when she could get it. She would keep the

children home on any pretext and one boy age nine was a confirmed truant. The family moved frequently. The boy was sent eventually to Plainfield.

7. Both parents of F. family were born in Tennessee and came to Indianapolis from Illinois. There were three children in school and one child below school age. One boy was a truant for three weeks. He was a discipline problem and his teacher failed to report. His attitude was very hostile and his attendance poor. His I. 2. was 63.

8. The five children of R. family were reported to the school visitor repeatedly and C.R. was considered a confirmed truant. M. R. lived with her grandfather who worked at Penn. roundhouse. Beside M. he was caring for four other grandchildren whose parents were dead. The parents of M. have been in court frequently. E., the youngest boy of the R. family disliked school so much that his teacher locked him in the washroom to prevent his running away. He had been humored at home and allowed to stay out when he had a tantrum. The parents finally became divorced and the father remarried. C. went to live with a relative who lived in a shack on the rear of a lot. The stepmother could not get along with the children and would not let C. stay home. The father seemed little interested in children and E., one of

the girls was twenty pounds underweight.

9. J. T. was reported to school visitor for absence. He claimed that he needed shoes. The boy had been excluded from school because of venereal disease, but his mother had not insisted upon his going to the clinic regularly. When he was readmitted to school his mother said it would be impossible for him to attend school unless clothing was furnished. She was out of employment and a social agency was paying her rent. On one occasion when the school visitor went to the home to investigate his poor attendance the mother giggled in a silly manner and said, "You're sick again, ain't you?" The visitor questioned the boy and decided that perhaps he should be given a blood test. He was found to need specific treatment and at the age of 16 he stopped attending school.

10. The B. family was superior to the rest of their neighbors. The home was neat and clean and inexpensively furnished. Both parents were born in Indianapolis. The mother seemed of normal intelligence and was courteous to the visitor. The family was faced with the problem of unemployment. The boy was truant; he had been sent to school every day.



11. M. family lived in a fairly nice part of town and had a very comfortable home. The standard of living was average. The mother had come from Germany when she was six years old. Two of the older children had graduated from high school, the youngest girl was talented in music. In an interview with the mother concerning the attendance of one of the boys the mother claimed that the boy had never liked his father and slept at home an average of two nights a week. The attitude of the father was that since the wife was looking after the children he would not take any responsibility in the matter. The mother gave the impression of being cooperative with the teachers of the high school but was quite ineffectual in reasoning the cause of the boy's behavior. She shifted the entire responsibility for school attendance to the school. The father wanted the boy sent to Plainfield when he in company with some other boys stole about \$1,000 worth of jewelry. He was sent to the Detention Home but through the influence of a friend he was released. The boy was sentenced to the Boys' School but the sentence was suspended pending good behavior. The court experience seemed to subdue him.

12. C.H. was referred by a parochial school and later by one of the public schools for truancy. The boy broke into one of the Star boxes and took the money. His family lived

in a fair neighborhood. The mother was nervous and very high strung. The father made a fair salary. He was not Catholic and did not care whether his children attended the Catholic school or not. The wife wished them to. The mother kept all of them home because of inclement weather.

The family later became destitute, and the children were sent to an institution maintained for the poor. They were excluded shortly because of exerting bad influence over the other children. When they re-entered the public school the mother was unable to make them attend school. The youngest boy attended less than one-third of the school term.

## APPENDICES

## ABSENTEE LIST

### VERIFIED CASES OF SICKNESS

Date.

[illegible]

TEACHER'S REPORT  
PLEASE GIVE COMPLETE INFORMATION

Indianapolis, \_\_\_\_\_ 192\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of pupil \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parents or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates of absence or tardiness \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

INDIANAPOLIS SCHOOLS  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL  
SERVICE

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Form No. 26

# FAMILY RECORD SHEET

SURNAME	DATE				
First Name	Date of Birth	Birth Place	Occupation or School	Grade	Age Left School
Mother					
Father (Maiden Name)					
Children					

Marital Condition of Parents			
Present : Marriage	Date	Place	
and F.	Date	Cause	
M.			
Separated	Divorced	Deserted	

Previous Marriages		Death or Divorced	Date  Place	Marriage	
Husband and Wife (Maiden Name)				Date	Place
Children of Previous Unions	Date of Birth	Birth Place	Occupation or School	Grade	Age Left School

Persons in Household	Sex	Age	Occupation or School	Amount Contributed to Family

	Race	Citizen	Residence In			Nat'l	Religion
			U.S.A.	State	City		

	Address of Family	No. Rooms	Rent Board